

STAFF REPORT

TO: Mayor and City Council

DATE: August 5, 2009

From: Roderick Simmons, Director
Parks, Recreation & Cultural Art

VIA: Gary Jackson, City Manager

SUBJECT: Capping Park Facility Rental Fee Adjustment Requests

Summary: Consideration of a recommendation to cap facility rental fee waivers.

Review: Staff has completed a review of best practices for facility rental fee waivers. Attached is the completed summary of best practices of cities for granting facility fee waivers. As with any city policy of this magnitude it comes down to the community value and the level of expected governmental services.

Staff contacted eleven parks and recreation departments across the state with different community make-ups to get a feel for their community tolerance level for granting fee waiver requests. Reviewing the results indicates there is no straight forward best practice for handling fee waiver requests. The only constant theme is departments that allow facility fees to be waived have many different options for approving the request. The only other common theme is there is not a cap on the amount of fee waiver before it requires city council approval.

My recommendations are as follows:

- Structure the facility rental fee waiver process similar to the city's outdoor special event co-sponsorship process, in that a maximum dollar value is established each budget year to award to organizations that meet the criteria for fee waivers. Once this dollar threshold is met during the budget year no more fee waivers will be granted. I recommend allocating a \$3,000 cap for the first year. The annual cap amount will be considered during the city's annual fees and charges approval process.
- The maximum amount of fee waiver that can be granted per request is \$500. The cap on the maximum amount per request would insure that all organizations granted a fee waiver receive the same amount of value from the city.
- Specialized facilities and enterprise funds will not be considerate for rental fee waivers. These facilities are the following: Municipal Golf Course, Nature Center, Aston Tennis Center, Food Lion Skate Park.
- Events that request assistants above this threshold will be encouraged to apply through the city's annual co-sponsorship process.

Pros:

- To ensure all organizations granted a rental fee waiver receive the same amount of value from the city.

Cons:

- Potentially could reduce the annual revenue budget for facility rentals by \$3,000 per year.

Recommendation: Staff recommends that Council adopt the Finance Committee recommendations regarding request for a facility rental fee waiver for use of Park facilities.

Attachment

- 1) Summary of best practices of cities for granting facility fee waivers
- 2) Facility Rental Fee Adjustment Policy